

# **EFFECTS OF REINFORCEMENT MATERIALS AND MATRIX PARTICLE SIZES ON MECHANICAL PROPERTIES AND WEAR OF RECYCLED ALUMINUM CHIPS**

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**To soul of my mother and father.**

**To my wife Hawraa nazar and my children Mustafa, Mina and Rotaj, their love and understanding had encouraged me to complete this great opportunity in my live.**



**PTTA UTHM**  
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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Ahmed Sahib Mahdi

## ABSTRACT

Recycling is the convert operation of the waste materials into objects and new materials. The objective of this study is to recycle AA6061 aluminum from the chip. Three particle sizes were used in this study. The smaller size of particle size 25  $\mu\text{m}$  was gotten. A series of studies was conducted to determine the mechanical properties, physical properties, heat treatment process, and wear resistance and to develop model prediction of wear resistance with silica reinforcement. In the first study, three particle sizes 25, 63, and 100  $\mu\text{m}$ , were sieved of the milled product to characterize its bulk properties of the compression strength. Results showed that the mix of 25 and 100  $\mu\text{m}$  is the best compression strength. Then, two groups were selected to study the effect of mixture particles according to the size of particles, 25 + 100  $\mu\text{m}$  and 25 + 63  $\mu\text{m}$ . Higher value of compression strength was observed by using 25 + 100  $\mu\text{m}$  which was 195.6 MPa. In the second study, heat treatment of the best compound was conducted to investigate the effect of the quenching and aging processes on compression strength. The heat treatment process was implanted with the quenching temperature of 530 °C for 2 h, thus the aging temperature is 175 °C with various aging holding time. Five aging holding times, namely, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 h, were selected. The optimal aging holding time is 4 h, then the compression strength was 300 MPa. Finally, wear test was conducted for the milled product. Three loads were used (5, 7.5 and 10 N) and three speed were used (300, 400 and 500 rpm). Four groups were classified for the wear test. The first group was the as-fabricated milled product. The second group was obtained by optimal heat treatment. The third group used graphite as a reinforcement material. The last group used silica as a reinforcement material. The results indicated that the specimens reinforced by silica material have the highest wear resistance ( $105 \times 10^{-9}$  g/cm) because of their high microhardness value. The prediction of volume loss was developed based on the reinforcement of silica material. In conclusion, the recycling aluminum chips process is successfully done by using 25 + 100  $\mu\text{m}$  particle size reinforced by silica, the prediction volume loss,  $Q_{\text{pred}}$  was  $5 * 10^{-8} \times \left( \frac{L.S}{((398.83 * \% \text{ Reinforcement}) + 79.22)} \right) - 0.02$ .

## ABSTRAK

Kitar semula adalah operasi menukar bahan buangan ke objek dan bahan baru. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengitar semula aluminium AA6061 dari cip. Tiga saiz partikel digunakan dalam kajian ini. Saiz partikel yang lebih kecil 25 µm telah diperolehi. Satu siri kajian dijalankan untuk menentukan sifat mekanikal, sifat fizikal, proses rawatan haba, dan rintangan haus untuk menghasilkan ramalan model rintangan haus dengan tetulang silika. Dalam kajian pertama, tiga saiz partikel 25, 63, dan 100 µm, telah ditapis untuk mencirikan sifat pukal kekuatan mampatannya. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa campuran 25 dan 100 µm adalah kekuatan mampatan terbaik. Kemudian, dua kumpulan dipilih untuk mengkaji kesan partikel campuran mengikut saiz partikel, 25 +100 µm dan 25 +63 µm. Nilai kekuatan mampatan yang lebih tinggi telah terhasil dengan menggunakan 25 + 100 µm iaitu 195.6 MPa. Dalam kajian kedua, hasil kompoun dari rawatan haba yang terbaik dijalankan untuk mengkaji kesan proses pelindapkejutan dan penuaan pada kekuatan mampatan. Proses rawatan haba dilakukan dengan suhu pelindap 530 °C selama 2 jam manakala suhu penuaan adalah 175 °C dilakukan pada pelbagai masa penuaan. Lima masa pegangan untuk penuaan iaitu, 2, 4, 6, 8, dan 10 jam telah dipilih. Masa pegangan untuk penuaan yang optimum adalah 4 jam dengan kekuatan mampatan 300 MPa. Akhir sekali, ujian haus dilakukan untuk produk yang dikisar. Tiga beban 5, 7.5 dan 10 N pada kelajuan 300, 400 dan 500 rpm masing-masing digunakan didalam empat kumpulan pengujian kehausan dilakukan. Kumpulan pertama adalah proses pengisaran, kedua diperolehi daripada rawatan haba yang optimum, ketiga menggunakan grafit sebagai bahan tetulang dan keempat menggunakan silika sebagai bahan tetulang. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa spesimen yang diperkuat dengan bahan silika mempunyai rintangan haus tertinggi ( $105 \times 10^{-9}$  g/cm) kerana nilai kekerasan yang tinggi. Ramalan kehilangan isi padu telah dihasilkan berdasarkan penguat bahan silika. Kesimpulannya, proses cip aluminium kitar semula berjaya dilakukan dengan menggunakan 25 + 100 µm saiz partikel yang diperkuat oleh silika dan persamalam ramalan kehilangan ramalan  $Q_{pred}$  adalah  $5 * 10^{-8} \times \left( \frac{L.S}{((398.83 * \% \text{ Reinforcement}) + 79.22)} \right) - 0.02$ .

$$10^{-8} \times \left( \frac{L.S}{((398.83 * \% \text{ Reinforcement}) + 79.22)} \right) - 0.02.$$

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| $a$      | The radius of the circular contact spots                      |
| $A_p$    | Appearance porosity   |
| $d$      | Diameter  |
| $E_c$    | Modulus of elasticity for composit                            |
| $E_m$    | Modulus of elasticity for matrix                              |
| $E_p$    | Modulus of elasticity for particle                            |
| $G_D$    | Green density   |
| Gr       | Graphite powder   |
| H        | Hardness  |
| K        | constant  |
| L        | Load  |
| $m_c$    | Mass of composit  |
| $m_m$    | Mass of matrim  |
| $m_p$    | Mass of particle  |
| $n$      | Number of revolutions of the disc                             |
| $n_s$    | The number of spots   |
| $\rho_c$ | Density for composite   |
| $\rho_m$ | Density for matrix  |
| $\rho_p$ | Density for particle  |
| Q        | Loss volume   |
| $r$      | the distance from the center of pin to the center of the disc |
| RT       | Room Temperature  |
| s        | Distance  |
| SEM      | Scanning Electron Microscope                                  |
| $S_G$    | Specific weight   |
| t        | the time of the wear test                                     |
| $T_m$    | Melting point   |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| $v_c$                | Volume fraction for composite          |
| $U_c$                | Poison's ratio for composite           |
| $v_m$                | Volume fraction for matrix             |
| $U_m$                | Poison's ratio for matrix              |
| $v_p$                | Volume fraction for particle           |
| $U_p$                | Poison's ratio for particle            |
| $w$                  | Weight loss                            |
| $W_A$                | Water absorption                       |
| $W_d$                | Wight of specimen (Dry)                |
| $W_i$                | Wight of specimen (suspended in water) |
| $W_r$                | Wear rate                              |
| $W_s$                | Wight of specimen (saturated by water) |
| $^{\circ}\text{C}$   | Degree centigrade                      |
| $\sigma_u$           | Ultimate tensile strength              |
| $\sigma_y$           | Yield stress                           |
| $\%_{reinforcement}$ | Percentage of reinforcement particles  |



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Aluminum is the most heavily consumed non-ferrous metals in the world with the current annual consumption is 24 million tons (Hejie *et al.*, 2015). Primary aluminum (i.e., extracted from ore) is approximately 75% of this total volume (18 million tons) as opposed to that derived from scrap metal processing (i.e., secondary aluminum) (Lajis *et al.*, 2014). In every melting process of conventional aluminum recycling, many losses occur in metal oxidation and in slag mixing. Amount of the metal volume is missed by conventional recycling as a chip during the finishing process (Lajis *et al.*, 2014).

Nowadays, an economical process has been discovered instead of conventional recycling, and this process involves the direct treatment of the chip of the metal (Sung *et al.*, 2015). The method of treating and collecting metal machining waste is called metal chip processing, which uses metal crushers, oil separators, drying of the chip, and other specialized equipment. Monolithic blocks are created by the specialized equipment through cold or hot compression.

Issues in the creating environment have appeared such as wet coolant and oil, then, chips cannot be remelted efficiently and economically, and the melting loss is

substantial. Subsequently, the chip processing is performed for maximum recovery and conservation (Nor azila, 2013).

Conventional recycling has caused environmental pollution. Environment protection expenditure further increases general costs (Maoling *et al.*, 2008). Several innovative processes have been proposed to recycle aluminum chip using direct hot compression (Gronostajski *et al.*, 2000), but cold compression for aluminum recycling is suggested in the present study because of the many problems that occur during bonding between particles.

The crushing in ball mills is an important technological process applied to reduce particle size. Ball mills are also widely used for blending, mixing, and dispersing of materials, and mechanical alloying. The powder can be produced by ball milling (Ahmed *et al.*, 2015a). Mixing for the matrix and reinforcement material is a critical step in powder metallurgy. This process can achieve a homogeneous distribution of particles in the matrix. Obtaining the tailored properties has become a major interest over the past three decades. Several unique mechanical properties have been derived such as high strength, high stiffness, low density, high wear resistance, and other desired properties. Nowadays, many parts used in the automobile industry, such as brake pads, pistons, gudgeon pins, cylinder liners, valves, and discs, are made from metal matrix composite materials.

Considering that the powder metallurgical method gives several advantages than other methods, it is more widely adopted in the manufacturing of metal matrix composites (MMC). The lower operating temperature in this method is an advantage as it reduces the possibility of chemical reaction between particles. It can also be mixed with several types of matrix and reinforcement phases through the same mixture system. Consequently, a higher volume fraction of reinforcement particles may be included in the compound compared to casting processes.

Composite materials are earning common acceptance as a result of their superior mechanical property, such as high strength to weight ratio.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Although metal production is useful for industry, a considerable amount of waste is produced, whether material chips during turning or milling or discarded used materials. These wastes and discards come back to smelters, whereby production processes are utilized for reusing metals. During waste recycling, oxidation can result in the loss of many materials (Boin and Bertram, 2015). Labor and energy costs, along with environmental protection expenditure, increase the general cost of manufacturing (Songmene *et al.*, 2011). The energy needed for recycled aluminum scrap is nearly 5% of that needed to produce it from ore. Secondary aluminum production has been greatly accepted. Various types of aluminum scrap exist, such as chips from machining or semi-finishing products. Unlike other forms of scrap, these types are difficult to recycle through conventional method (such as casting process) because of their elongated spiral shape and chip size (Amri *et al.*, 2015). The surface area is large and the apparent density is low for chips, resulting in inconvenient handling and transportation. In addition, chips are covered with oxides and emulsion oil, which are bad for recycling. Conventional recycling is characterized by a large number of operations, high operating costs, and high energy consumption.

Recently, recycled aluminum particles by milling process have been suggested as a new recycling process for machined chips because of its relatively low cost. It is also favorable for environment protection. Obtaining relatively high-density blocks from the chips is important, and these issues can be improved during solid-state recycling. The lowest energy consumption is introduced as a criterion to optimize cold compaction technology. Energy consumption during hot compaction involves endothermic and mechanical power. Hot compaction is consumed when the hydrostatic machine loosens the compacted state of the chips. Current research uses cold compaction with small particle size.

As such, the present work proposes cold compaction of small particles size aluminum chips as a method of recycled aluminum chip. Aluminum particles are mixed with other reinforcement particles to increase its wear resistance.

### 1.3 Objectives of Research

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- a. To produce small particle sizes within range (25 $\mu$ m to 100 $\mu$ m) from recycled aluminum chip using mechanical milling.
- b. To determine the mechanical and physical properties of aluminum matrix composite (MMC) produced from aluminum chips by solid state recycling.
- c. To identify the effect of heat treatment on aluminum matrix composite (MMC) produced from aluminum chips.
- d. To develop an empirical model based on experimental data for the wear resistance of recycled Al MMC using silica reinforcement element.

### 1.4 Scope of research

The scopes of this study focus on the following points:

- a. Aluminum chip.

Aluminum metal AA6061 was used in this research. High-speed milling machine (Sodick-MC 430L) at UTHM was used to produce the chip. The chip length was about 2mm from this process.

- b. Preparing the specimens.

The milling process was proceeding before the preparing of the specimen. Three speeds were used to produce small particle sizes (300, 350, 400 RPM). The duration of the milling process was 20 hrs. Particle sizes were classified to three

sizes (25, 63 and 100  $\mu\text{m}$ ) using sieving process. After that, each particle was mixed with zinc stearate 1 % as a binder. Cold compaction process was performed to produce the specimens in this research. Compaction pressure is carried out using uniaxial hydraulic press at the range of 5–9 tons to determine the best pressure. The holding time is within the range of 10–20 min. Sintering is performed using a tube furnace at the range 487  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ –617  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  to determine the best temperature.

c. Heat treatment process

Heat treatment is performed using quenching temperature at 530  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 2 h and aging process at 175  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 h. Electrical box furnace was used for quenching and aging. The water was used as a quenching media in this research.

d. Conduct the tests

Mechanical and physical were conducted in this research. Mechanical tests are included micro-hardness, compression and wear resistance tests. Physical tests are conducted to assess density, porosity and water absorption.

e. Wear test

Pin on disc method was performed to assess the wear resistance. The pin dimensions were 13mm diameter and 10 mm height, while the dimensions of the disc were 200 mm diameter and 2 mm thickness. On the other hand, the frictional speed used for wear resistance test is at the range of 300–500 RPM, likewise the load for the wear resistance test is at the range of 5–10 N. The reinforcement materials are graphite and silica powder. The particle size of both materials is 40  $\mu\text{m}$ . The percentage of reinforcement materials is 1.5%–4.5% for silica and graphite powder. Five groups were used in this test. The first was as fabricated specimen; the second was heat treated specimen, the third and fourth were reinforced by graphite and silica respectively. The last group was compound between reinforced and heat treatment process.

f. Microstructure analysis

Optical microscope is utilized to check the bonding between aluminum particles, distribution of the particles and pores. Scanning electron microscope is used to measure the length and shape of the chip size.

### 1.5 Contribution of the research

From this study, the following contributions have been made to the academia and knowledge. Firstly, Global reduction of carbon dioxide (emissions during casting process) is becoming important to prevent global warming caused by greenhouse production. The demand for decreasing energy consumption (fuel) of industrial processes as well as production and transportation engineering is a main factor in today's industrial world. This research introduces the direct technique of powder metallurgy with low energy consumption and cost without intervening the metallurgical processes. This technique provides low air pollution emission and high metal conservation than conventional methods. Therefore, ball mill process was used for this study to produce smaller particle size. Secondly, the compaction process is possible to accomplish at various pressing conditions. Best compaction parameters were studied. The mechanical and physical properties of recycled aluminum MMC were investigated in this study. Heat treatment process was done on the product from recycled aluminum particle sizes. Many researchers had published according to powder technology (Gaurav *at el.*, 2015; Xiao *at el.*, 2011), but the recycled material by milling process did not publish yet now. Finally, the reinforcement process is very important. Some of researchers have been used silicon carbide for reinforcement. In this study, graphite and silica were used for reinforcement. Finally, an empirical model based on experimental data was developed for the wear resistance of recycled Al MMC using silica reinforcement element as followed equation:



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